

HISTORY RECORDER'S REPORT FOR THE VILLAGE OF
HAWSTEAD MAY 2008

The four-yearly local elections were called for May 2007 and the new parish council met on the 24th in Hawstead church at 7.30pm with the AGM at 8.00pm. At the closing date for nominations five people had been put forward for the seven seats and no election was needed. Brian Kew resigned as chairman and was succeeded by Malcolm Cornwell.

The long running project of building a new village hall, lead by the Community Council, now began to take physical shape after the final tranche of funding was put in place. On Saturday 14th July, the village was invited to witness the cutting of the first turf for the foundations at 11 am. Work was expected to take 12 to 13 weeks. Foundations started in earnest on 23rd July, Monday morning. 106 tons of oak was delivered as work began on the roof of the village hall on Monday 17 September. (The old village hall had been demolished in April 2003 after the roof was ripped off in storm in October 2002.)

The progress on laying the foundations was visible to visitors to the Village fete and flower show on Sunday Sep 2nd, held on the village green. It was opened by Kenneth Riggall, "The Jolly Shepherd" who unfortunately died on January 31 2008.

An open morning was held on Saturday, 10 November to see progress on the new village hall. By 15th November, insulation plasterboard and doors were being fitted. The electricity supply was connected on the 3rd Jan 2008.

The culmination was the grand opening of the hall with a ceremony on April 19th. Rosemary Carr and Jim Lebbon ceremoniously cut the ribbon in front of 130 villagers attending the party.

April 26th saw the first event in the new hall, a performance of "Art", a comedy performed by actors from the Bury Theatre Royal on their annual tour of village halls. The Hall was also the venue for the Plant Sale, on 17th May.

The Community council also subsidized the trip to the pantomime, which was Cinderella on Dec. 30th at The Theatre Royal, and on Dec 19th, the over 60's Christmas lunch.

The Metcalfe Arms opened on 8th June, 2007 after being closed since the previous March 2006, following an open day for the village the previous evening. The event was covered by the Bury Free Press on Friday 18th June 2007.

On the Bank Holiday Sunday 27th May 2007 a large tree branch was blown down across Church Road by the Old Rectory, blocking the road. BT lines and electricity cables brought down. There had been continuous rain since 8am, the consequence of a North Sea low pressure area, which deepened during the day. Consequently, strong North Easterly gusts caused a chestnut tree branch in the Old Rectory front garden to break off. Police closed off Church Road from junction with Bull Lane to the junction with the Bury Road in Hawstead. The road was re-opened on Tuesday 29th May 2007.

A tree blew down in Bull Lane on the edge of the village green parish land on 13th June 2007.

There was similarly wind and storm damage overnight 29th February/1st March 2008, with tree damage.

The Community Council Easter Egg hunt was cancelled because of snow and bad weather on Sunday 23rd March 2008. Some fallen trees were reported to be blocking the footpath.

Last year, the new one-way system including Gypsy Lane caused an outcry in the village. The traffic management experiment was later modified to a traffic calming scheme. Surveys were carried out in October 2007 and compared to figures for November 2004. They showed the average speed in Hardwick Lane to be around 18mph. The traffic calming scheme was deemed a success even though most residents say speeding is still a problem. St. Edmundsbury Borough Council put in the measures including a 20mph zone in Hardwick Lane in July 2007, A report to the council's Sustainable Development Panel said it was unlikely further traffic calming would prevent a minority of drivers from speeding, A report was printed in the Bury Free Press on March 7th 2008.

However, speeding through Hawstead remains a problem, as shown on Monday 26th Nov 2007. There was a car crash on the Bury Road - travelling into Hawstead, on the bend by the Pound just by the 30mph sign, at about 5.00pm. The road was closed and access restricted for about an hour. Mud on the road was a contributory factor.

Margaret Crockford had a letter published in the Bury Free Press on Friday February 22nd, concerning the town losing its individuality as a result of the cattle market development.

On the sporting front, cyclists geared up on Sunday 10th June 2007 for the 10th St. Edmunds Wheels event. Cyclists of all ages and on a range of bikes set off on a course which took them through Whepstead and Hawstead. The Suffolk Historic Churches Trust sponsored bike ride on September 8, 2007 also included Hawstead.

Katie Fairbairn, who was at one time chair of the Parish Council, played in the annual East Anglian Croquet Federation tournament staged at Ickworth Park on September 8th and reported in The Bury Free Press on Sept 14th 2007. As half of Bury's second pair, they won their first three games ending the day with four wins, one draw and two losses.

Hawstead Church on Sunday 30th Sept 2007 welcomed the Reverend James Longe, who was licensed to the benefice as Assistant Priest. He will work with the Rector, Martin Thrower throughout the six parishes that make up the Benefice.

The NAFDAS organisation began to record aspects of the church, with the end result intended to be an inventory of the building. Fund raising was started by Bill Crockford to refurbish the hatchments (paintings in the church bell-tower).

The Benefice organized a sponsored walk on Saturday 6th October, with a circular route starting and finishing at Hawstead.

The Harvest Festival service was held on Sunday September 16th at 11am and an Advent Lunch organized for the 3rd December.

Christmas Carols and readings were held in the church on Sunday 16th Dec. 2007 at 6.00pm, with an augmented choir of enthusiastic villagers.

The annual Hawstead village plant sale took place on 26th May 2007. A wildflower walk was organized by Suffolk Wildlife Trust on Wed evening 13th June and took a route behind Cullum House and across Hawstead Green.

Sunday evening 22nd July saw a ragwort collection on the village green and a cut of the village green for hay was made on 6th August. Both these activities are work required by Natural England (DEFRA) for its maintenance.

On Boxing Day, the Suffolk Hunt met at Hawstead Lodge, with 400-500 supporters and about 60 riders.

A "wear-it-pink" day to raise money for breast and ovarian cancer was supported by Pinford End Nursing Home, which held a pink raffle on October 25th 2007, raising £130.

For the third successive year, traditional May Day celebrations were held on Thurs May 1st 2008, at 5.30am on the corner of the village green at the end of Bells Lane, with the Green Dragon Morris men. Breakfast followed at Fyletts Manor Cottages.

The death of Rosemary Margaret Finnimore on 29th March 2008 was announced. She was the wife of the Reverend Keith Finnimore, who was the Rector of the Hawstead Benefice from

1991 to 2001. At one time she was Head of Music at Thurston School and continued her musical interests as the choirmaster of the Trinity Singers and as the organist at three churches.

Digital radio signals from some stations can now be heard from villages south of Bury. The broadband speed from the Sicklesmere telephone exchange is still only a disappointing 512mbs.

The council tax for Hawstead houses was increased by 5% compared to last year. This was made up of an increase of 3.7% to Suffolk County Council, an increase of 3.4% to St. Edmundsbury Borough Council and an increase of 9.0% to the Suffolk Police Authority. Although the Parish council has not increased its expenditure for the coming year, the increase in the Parish Precept of 29.1 % is a result of a reduced grant from the Borough Council.

St. Edmundsbury Borough Council decided on 10 planning applications for the parish of Hawstead for the year 01 May 2007 to 30 April 2008.

Finally, as recorded by the Land Registry, in the year 1st May 2007 to 30th April 2008, there were 2 houses sold in post code 5NJ, 2 in 5NU, and 1 in 5NW.

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Hawstead History Recorder

May 2008